



## S. 2135 – CHILD SOLDIERS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

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### FLOOR SITUATION

S. 2135 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) on October 3, 2007. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on December 19, 2007.

S. 2135 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 8, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

S. 2135 amends Title 18 of the United States Code to impose a fine and/or a prison sentence of up to 20 years if that person recruits, enlists, or conscripts a person 15 years old or younger into an armed force or uses that child in hostilities. In the case that the death of any person results from such action, the offender may be fined and imprisoned for any number of years or life.

S. 2135 provides jurisdiction under this Act if the offender is a U.S. national or legal alien, or if the offender habitually resides in the United States, or is present in the U.S. irrespective of nationality. If the offense concerning child soldiers occurs in whole or part in the U.S., the offender is also under the jurisdiction of this Act.

This legislation also amends the Immigration and Nationality Act (P.L. 89-236) to state that any alien who has recruited or used child soldiers may be inadmissible to the United States or deportable. In addition, such aliens would be disqualified for asylum.

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### BACKGROUND

According to the U.S. State Department, child soldiering is a form of trafficking in persons that involves the recruitment of children to be used in conflict areas. Governments, paramilitary organizations, and rebel groups all are known to recruit and utilize child soldiers. The use of child soldiers is most frequent in Africa and Asia, but also occurs in the Americas, Eurasia, and the Middle East. Children may be recruited as combatants, or utilized as spies, guards, cooks, or servants in conflict zones. Young girls are often the victims of sex crimes in these situations. In Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Uganda, at least one-third of child soldiers are female.

The Department of State's annual "Trafficking in Persons Report" details actions to combat child soldiering. According to this year's report, more than 300,000 children under 18 are currently being exploited in more than 30 armed conflicts worldwide. The majority of child soldiers are between the ages of 15 and 18, but some are as young as 7 or 8 years of age.

[State Department – The Facts about Child Soldiers](#)

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### COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that implementing S. 2135 "would have no significant cost to the federal government." [Full CBO Cost Estimate](#)

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### STAFF CONTACT

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